

## Choose the Right Fish To Eat

You and your growing baby need protein. Fish is a good source of protein. However, some fish is not safe to eat. You need to know how to choose the **right fish** to eat. Read this brochure to find out how.



Call 222-4770 for more information about safe fish, or visit our website at [www.healthri.org](http://www.healthri.org).

Contaminants in Fish Hotline  
222-4770  
[www.healthri.org](http://www.healthri.org)

MAKE HE<sup>♥</sup>ALTH PART OF YOUR FAMILY  
RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

## Fish is Good



## Mercury is Bad!

*Advice for mothers on  
choosing safe fish to eat.*

## Fish Is Good

- Fish is a good source of protein.
- Fish has many vitamins and minerals.
- Fish is low in fat.
- Fish can be part of a healthy diet.
- A healthy diet helps prevent heart disease.



## Mercury Is Bad!

Mercury is a metal found in nature and used for many things. Sometimes mercury gets into ponds, lakes, rivers and the ocean through pollution. This can be dangerous because when mercury pollutes the water, it can get into the fish that live there. If you eat fish with mercury, the mercury can act as a poison and harm you and your baby.



Like lead poisoning, too much mercury can affect your baby's brain and how your baby learns, moves and behaves. It can cause serious health problems for your baby.

If you are pregnant, nursing or planning to have a baby in the next year, you can avoid mercury by choosing the **right fish** to eat. You can't see or smell mercury in fish. Mercury can't be cut away, cleaned or cooked out of fish. The best way to avoid mercury is to know which fish to choose for a healthy diet.

## Choose Fish Wisely For You and Your Family



**Some fish** can have high levels of mercury and other contaminants that aren't safe for your baby. Avoid eating:

- Swordfish
- Shark
- Bluefish
- Striped bass
- Freshwater fish caught in RI other than trout caught in stocked waters

If you eat tuna, make sure you choose **light tuna**, not other types of tuna.

For more information, call 222-4770 or visit our website at [www.healthri.org](http://www.healthri.org).

## **Advice on Mercury in Fish**

If your family likes to catch fish in Rhode Island, and you eat the fish you catch, you need to know which fish are safe to eat. The information on the front and back of this card should help you make the best decisions.

### **When Fishing in Saltwater**

Flounder, haddock and most other saltwater fish you can catch in the Bay and Ocean are low in mercury and safe to eat.

**Young children and women who are pregnant, nursing or planning to have a baby in the coming year should not eat shark, swordfish, bluefish and striped bass.**

Clams, crabs and other shellfish are low in mercury. Collect shellfish from approved areas. Approved areas are shown on the weather page of the Providence Journal or you can call the Department of Environmental Management at 222-3961 for information. Remember to cook shellfish thoroughly before eating them.

### **Before you eat the fish you catch**

Check the Department of Health Website:  
[www.healthri.org/environment/risk/fish.htm](http://www.healthri.org/environment/risk/fish.htm)  
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## When Fishing in Freshwater

**Young children and women who are pregnant, nursing or planning to have a baby in the coming year should not eat freshwater fish from Rhode Island ponds, lakes, or rivers.** Choose trout from stocked waters or saltwater fish instead.

### For everyone else:

Others can safely eat **one meal of most freshwater fish per week** if they know where to fish and what kinds of fish are safe to catch and eat:

- Avoid fish with the most mercury (bass, pike, pickerel).
- Fish for stocked trout.
- With the exception of trout, **do not eat any fish** from the lower Woonasquatucket River; Yawgoog, Wincheck, and Meadowbrook Ponds; and Quidnick Reservoir.
- Vary where you fish and what kind of fish you eat.
- Choose smaller fish to eat (according to the Department of Environmental Management's allowable size limit regulations).
- Limit eel and black crappie taken from all ponds, and all fish from Tucker, Yawgoo and Watchaug Ponds, to **one meal per month**.

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